

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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R 080800Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL MEDAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 529

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDAN 0446

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJ: SUHARTO VISIT TO NORTH SUMATRA

1. PRESIDENT SUHARTO MET A MIXED RESPONSE IN AUGUST 7 VISIT TO N. SUMATRA. FLAGS WERE EVERYWHERE AND CROWDS WERE RELATIVELY BIG BUT SEEMED TO CONSIST OF SCHOOLCHILDREN AND CURIOUS ONLOOKERS. CULTURAL CENTER, SCOUT TRAINING CENTER, AND MICRO-WAVE TELEPHONE SYSTEM SUCCESSFULLY INAUGURATED.

2. MOST CONTROVERSIAL WAS INAUGURATION OF CHINESE-OWNED AND MALAYSIAN CHINESE-MANAGED PLYWOOD FACTORY AT BESITANG. DEDICATION SPEECHES EMPHASIZED DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES OUTSIDE CITIES TO THE BENEFIT OF LOCAL POPULATIONS; HOWEVER, AMCONSUL PRESENT NOTED UNFRIENDLY CROWD MURMURINGS AS CHINESE OWNER SPOKE. EDITORIAL COMMENT PRIOR TO VISIT FROM MEDAN'S TRI-WEEKLY ANEKA MINGGU FOLLOWS: "ACCORDING TO THE LATEST INFORMATION, PRES SUHARTO MAY CANCEL HIS SCHEDULED INAUGURATION OF THE BESITANG PLYWOOD FACTORY... WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED...WE ARE SOMEWHAT HURT BY REPORTS THAT THE PLYWOOD FACTORY DISCRIMINATES AGAINST INDONESIANS. FOREIGNERS OR INDONESIAN CITIZENS OF FOREIGN ORIGIN ENJOY PRIORITY OF BEING EMPLOYED. THERE IS ALSO DISCRIMINATION IN PAY. IT WOULD NOT BE DESIRABLE IT WILL BE RECORDED IN HISTORY THAT THE FACTORY HAS BEEN INAUGURATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE

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REP OF INDONESIA...IT WOULD BE WELL FOR THE MANPOWER OFFICE TO

INVESTIGATE THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIGENOUS WORKERS."

3. COMMENT: VISIT OVERALL APPEARS BENEFICIAL TO PRESIDENT'S
IMAGE HERE DESPITE PROBLEMS AT BESITANG. DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT,
LABOR-INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES IS VIEWED AS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO
THEREGION AND WORTHY OF PRESIDENTIAL ATTENTION.
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